

the governor had issued so stringent an order, nothing remained for him but to obey; but as soon as he should be compelled no longer to furnish M. Lombard with any thing, he would smash the dishes and plates from which the cabinet counsellor had eaten, and burn the bedding on which he had slept."

M. Lombard had apparently not heard these mortifying words. Assisted by his footman, who had been sent for, he hastily rose, and sat down at the table to dinner.

In the evening the major repaired with a few officers to the hotel, and inquired for the landord.

He came in, somewhat confused, and convinced that the major would censure him for his conduct. The latter, however, went to meet him, and, with a kindly smile, offered him his hand. "Sir," he said, "these gentlemen and I have taken it upon ourselves to express to you, in the name of all our comrades, our delight at the brave and manly reply you made to-day, when compelled to furnish Lombard, the traitor, with food and bedding. The officers of the garrison have resolved to board with you, for we deem it an honor to be the guests of so patriotic a man."

CHAPTER VII.

THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT.

LOUISA waited till Lombard had been carried away amid the jeers of the people; then, accompanied by her friend, she hastened down-stairs in order to continue her journey. Many persons were still assembled in the street, who, instead of following Lombard, had preferred to see the queen once more. They received her with enthusiastic cheers, and heartily wished her a safe journey.

"Give our best wishes to our king, and tell him that we will be faithful to him as long as we live!" exclaimed a voice from the crowd.

"We thank the queen for ordering the traitor to be arrested!" exclaimed another. "Now we need not have any fears for her, and know that she is able to continue her journey without incurring any danger whatever."

Louisa greeted her subjects smilingly, and lowered the windows of the carriage for the purpose of returning their salutations, and of being seen by them.

"Yes," she said, when the carriage rolled through the gate into the high-road, "yes, I hope the prophecy of these good men will be fulfilled, and that I shall safely reach my destination. Now that Lombard has been arrested, I am satisfied of it, for he had followed me in order to inform the enemy of my whereabouts; I feel convinced of it. But the judgment of Heaven has overtaken him, and he has received his punishment. Oh, how dreadful it must be to stand before the people with so bad a conscience, so pale and cowardly a face, and to be accused by them! We are able to bear up under the greatest afflictions when our soul is free from guilt! And therefore I will meet the future courageously and patiently, hoping that God will have mercy on us. Henceforth there will be but one duty for me, and that is, to be a faithful mother, and a comforter to my husband in his misfortunes. Oh, Caroline, my heart, which was lately, as it were, frozen and dead, is reawakening now—it is living and throbbing with joy, for I shall see my husband and my children! If all should forsake us, love will remain with us, and he whose heart is full of love will not be forsaken by the Lord."

She leaned back and closed her eyes. Profound peace was depicted on her handsome face; her brow was calm and cloudless, and a sweet smile played on her lips. Grief had not yet marked this noble and youthful countenance with its mournful yet eloquent traces, and its handwriting was not yet to be read on her expansive forehead.

"Oh," whispered her friend to herself, contemplating the beautiful slumbering queen, "oh, that grief might pass away from her like a dark cloud—that no thunderbolt burst forth from it and strike that beloved head! But I am afraid the lightning will at last blight all the blossoms of her heart. O God, give her strength, nerve her in her sufferings, as Thou hast blessed her in her happiness! She is sleeping; let her slumber be peaceful and refreshing, so that it may invigorate her mind!" Madame von Berg leaned cautiously, in order not to disturb the queen, into the other corner of the carriage, which rapidly drove along the high-road.

The journey was continued uninterruptedly from station to station; in every town and village the people, as soon they had recognized her, hastened to procure fresh horses for her, and crowds gathered everywhere to cheer her on her way. She had already passed through Frankfort, and stopped in the village of Rettwein in front of the superintendent's house. The footman entered and asked in her name for another set

of horses. The superintendent looked at him uneasily and gloomily. "I will get them directly," he said; "I will go myself to the stable and harness them, in order not to detain the queen unnecessarily." He left the house hastily, and the footman returned to the carriage.

Louisa had risen and contemplated with a melancholy air the deserted landscape. For the first time since the beginning of her journey she was not welcomed on her arrival. Nobody seemed to know or care that it was the queen who was seated in the carriage. Only a few tow-headed peasants' children, in ragged, dirty dresses, rushed toward the superintendent's house and stared at her, without saluting or thanking her for her kindly nods.

"We shall frequently ride out of the gate, but no drums will be beaten," murmured she, with a faint smile, and sank back on the cushions.

Time passed, and no horses made their appearance. The queen glanced uneasily at her watch. "We have been here nearly an hour," she said; "this long delay renders me uneasy."

She rose once more and looked again out of the coach window. The same silence prevailed. The children were still in front of the house, with their fingers in their mouths staring at the carriage. At a distance the dull lowing of the cows in their stables and the barking of dogs were to be heard. No human being, except the few children, was to be seen; even the superintendent did not make his appearance, although he knew that the queen was waiting at his door. Just then, however, a laborer, in a long blouse, with heavy wooden shoes, came out of the house and remained at the door, staring with his small blue eyes at the royal carriage.

"I do not know why," murmured Louisa, uneasily, "but this silence frightens me; it fills my heart with a feeling of anxiety which I cannot well explain. It seems to me as though every thing around me were breathing treachery and mischief, and some great danger were menacing me. Let us set out—we must leave this place. Why do not the horses come?"

"Will your majesty permit me to call the footman, and ask him to hurry up the postilion?" said Madame von Berg, leaning out of the window.

"Tell them to make haste," she said to the approaching footman. "Her majesty wishes to continue her journey immediately."

"The horses are not yet here," exclaimed he anxiously; "the superintendent promised he would fetch and harness them himself, and he does not return."

Some one set up a loud, scornful laugh, which reached the queen's ears. She bent forward and looked uneasily at the laborer who was standing at the door with folded arms. The footman turned, and asked him, indignantly, why he laughed. The man looked at him with twinkling eyes. "Well," he said, "I laugh because you are looking for horses, and have been waiting here for an hour already. But they will not come, for the superintendent has driven two of them through the back gate into the field, and then mounted the third, and rode off!"

The queen uttered a low cry, and placed her hand convulsively on her heart; she felt there a piercing pain, depriving her of breath, and turning her cheeks pale.

"Then the stable is empty?" said Madame von Berg.

"Yes, and there is not a hack even in the whole village; the peasants have taken them all to Küstrin, lest the French should take them."

"Are the French, then, so near?"

"The superintendent said this morning he had seen them at Bärwalde, two miles from our village."

"Let us start—let us set out without a minute's delay," said Louisa, anxiously grasping her friend's arm. "The superintendent is a traitor, and has left the village in order to inform our enemies that I am here. Oh, Caroline, we must escape, and if I cannot do otherwise, I shall pursue my journey on foot!"

"No, your majesty, there must and will be some expedient," replied Caroline, resolutely. "Permit me to alight for a moment, and speak to the postilion who drove us hither."

"I shall alight with you," exclaimed the queen, rising and trying to open the coach door.

Madame von Berg wished to keep her back. "What," she exclaimed in dismay. "I am sure your majesty will not—"

"Speak personally to the postilion? Yes, I will. He is a human being, like all of us, and at this hour happier and more enviable than we are. Perhaps he will have mercy on his sovereign!"

She hastily left the carriage, and ordered the footman to conduct her to the postilion, who, during the last hour, had fed and watered his horses, and was just about to ride back with them to his station. He hastened to obey the order,

and approached the queen, who stood trembling near the carriage by the side of Madame von Berg.

"Speak to him first," said Louisa to her friend.

"You have heard that we cannot get any other horses," said Madame von Berg. "Her majesty wants you, therefore, to drive us to the next station."

"That is impossible, madame," said the postilion; "my horses are exhausted, and I myself am so weary that I am almost unable to stand, for I have been on horseback for three days. We had to take fugitives to Küstrin all the time."

"If you drive us thither rapidly and without delay, you shall be liberally rewarded; you may depend on it," replied Madame von Berg.

"All the rewards of the world would not do me any good, inasmuch as neither I nor my horses are able to continue the journey to Küstrin," he replied, shrugging his shoulders. "I would gladly comply with your request, but I cannot."

"You cannot?" asked the queen, in her sonorous voice, "have you any children?"

"Yes, madame, I have children. Two boys and a girl."

"Well, suppose you should hear that your children were in Küstrin, that some great danger was menacing them, and that they were anxiously crying for their father. What would you do then?"

"I would gallop with lightning speed, not caring if the trip killed my horses, could I only reach my children!"

"Well," said the queen, with a gentle smile, "although you are a father, and love your children so ardently, yet you are cruel enough to refuse your assistance to a mother who wishes to hasten to hers? I beseech you take me to them, for they are looking with anxiety for me." As she uttered these words her eyes filled with tears, and her lips trembled.

The man was silent, and gazed with an air of surprise at Louisa's beautiful face. "Madame," he said, after a pause, "pray enter the carriage again. I will take you to Küstrin—you shall be with your children in an hour. But I tell you, madame," he added, turning to Madame von Berg, "I do not go for the sake of the reward you have promised me, and I will not take any money. I go because it would be infamous not to reunite a mother and her children. Now, make haste." He turned round without waiting for a reply, and began to prepare for the journey.

The queen gazed after him with beaming glances, and then

raised her eyes to heaven. "I thank Thee, my God," she murmured. "Give me strength that I may still believe in the human heart, and that such a discovery as I have made to-day as to the treachery of one man may not harden my heart! Come, Caroline, let us enter; in an hour we shall be with my children; oh, in an hour, I shall see the king!" An expression of delight overspread her face like sunshine, and she hastened to the carriage with light, elastic steps.

The postilion whipped the horses. The village was soon left behind, and they proceeded rapidly toward their destination.

"How fast the kind-hearted man drives!" said Louisa. "He does not do so for the sake of the queen, but because he thinks of his children, and commiserates a mother's heart. Oh, I confess, my heart was painfully moved by the discovery of the superintendent's treachery, but the all-merciful God sends me this excellent man. I shall ever remember him, and, please God, I will reward him for his kindness, by taking care of his children."

"But I trust your majesty will also remember the traitor, and cause him to be punished," said Madame von Berg, indignantly. "He has committed a great crime against his queen and against his fatherland, and ought to be called to account."

"If he has deserved it, let God punish him," said Louisa, gently. "I shall try to forget him, and I beg you not to say any thing about it to the king. I am afraid, my dear, we should have much, very much to do, if we were to punish all those who betray us. The superintendent was the first faithless subject we met, but he will not be the last. Let us forget him. But what is that? Why does the postilion drive so fast? It seems as if the carriage had wings. What does it mean?"

In fact, they dashed along the road like an arrow, and, as though this were not sufficient, the anxious voice of the footman was heard shouting, "Forward, postilion! Forward, as fast as possible!"

"There is something wrong, and I must know what it is!" exclaimed the queen. She rose from her seat, and opened the front window. "Tell me honestly and directly," she said to the footman, "why does the postilion drive so rapidly?"

"If your majesty commands me to do so, I must tell the truth," replied he. "We are pursued by French chasseurs. They are galloping behind us on the high-road. I can already distinguish their uniforms."

"And shall we be able to escape them?" asked Louisa, with the semblance of perfect calmness.

"We hope so, your majesty. If the horses can run fifteen minutes longer, we are safe, for then we shall be in Küstrin."

"Tell the postilion that I shall provide for the education of his children, if we reach Küstrin in fifteen minutes," replied the queen.

She then sank back for a minute like a bruised reed. A heart-rending scream escaped her, and she raised her hand in despair. Presently she again became composed and looked back from the window, so as to be able to see the approaching danger.

Like lightning they proceeded along the high-road, but the chasseurs gained upon them, and the distance rapidly decreased. The queen's piercing eyes could already distinguish the faces of her enemies. She heard the loud shouts and oaths with which they sought to increase their speed. She leaned back, and a fearful pallor overspread her cheeks, but she was still calm.

"Listen to what I tell you, Caroline," she said, in a grave, solemn voice, "I cannot survive the disgrace of being taken prisoner by the French. I will not adorn, as a modern Cleopatra, the triumphal entry of the modern Augustus. To live and to die honorably is my motto. I prefer death to ignominious captivity. Tell it to my husband and my children. And now to the will of God I commit myself. The moment that a French soldier extends his hand toward me, this friend will deliver me!"

She drew a small dagger from her bosom, and grasped it firmly and resolutely.

"What are you going to do?" exclaimed Caroline, in terror.

"Hush!" replied the queen, "my resolution is irrevocable. Sooner death than the disgrace of ridicule! Let us see what is going on."

She leaned once more out of the carriage, which was still dashing along with the utmost rapidity. The chasseurs were fast approaching. The panting and snorting of the foaming horses were already heard—the flashing, triumphant eyes of the soldiers distinctly seen. Every second brought them nearer and nearer. Louisa withdrew her head. Her right hand firmly grasped the dagger. In breathless exhaustion, and as pale as though dying, she awaited her fate.

Suddenly they rolled with great noise over a paved street—they stopped—and Louisa thought it was an angel's voice,

when she heard the words, "There is Küstrin! We are saved!"

She started up, and looked once more out of the window. Yes, she was saved. The chasseurs were galloping off again, and close at hand was the first gate of the fortress of Küstrin. She had constantly looked back toward the pursuing enemy, not toward her destination, and now that she was saved, it seemed to her a miracle, for which she thanked God from the bottom of her heart.

They passed through the gate, but could only drive at a slow pace. An immense chaos of vehicles loaded with bedding, furniture, trunks, cases, boxes, and bags, obstructed the passage. Shrieks, lamentations, and oaths, resounded in the wildest confusion. All the inhabitants of the suburbs and neighboring villages had fled hither with their movables, to seek protection behind the walls of the fortress.

The queen had again concealed the dagger in her bosom, and looked up to heaven with eyes full of fervent gratitude.

"I am saved!" she whispered; "I shall see again my husband and my children. Life is mine again!"

The passage became wider. They were able to advance more rapidly, and soon reached the market-place. A general in uniform was just crossing it. When he was passing near her, the queen joyfully exclaimed:

"Köckeritz! Where is the king?"

"Oh, Heaven be praised that your majesty has arrived! The king is here. He is standing among the generals in front of the house yonder."

They stopped. The coach door opened, and the pale, melancholy face of the king looked in. Louisa stretched out her arms toward him. "Frederick! my dear, dear husband!" she exclaimed, and, encircling his neck with her arms, imprinted a kiss on his lips. He did not utter a word, but drew her with an impetuous motion into his arms and carried her into the house, regardless of the rules of etiquette, through the crowd of generals, who bowed and stepped aside. She clung tenderly to him and supported her head with a blissful smile on his shoulder. He now placed the beloved burden slowly and cautiously into an easy-chair; then crossed the room and opened the door leading into an adjoining chamber.

"Come, come, your mother is here!" said he, abruptly, and two boys ran immediately into the room, with a loud, joyous exclamation.

"My sons, my beloved sons!" cried Louisa, stretching out

her hands toward them. They rushed to her, clasping her in their arms and kissing her. The queen pressed them to her heart, shedding tears, half of grief, and half of happiness at being reunited with her family. Not a word was spoken; only sighs and sobs, and expressions of tenderness, interrupted the silence. The king stood at the window, looking at his wife and sons, and something like a tear dimmed his eyes. "I would gladly die if they could only be happy again," he murmured to himself; "but we are only in the beginning of our misfortunes, and worse things are in store for us!"

He was right; worse things were in store for them. Day after day brought tidings of fresh disasters. The first was, that Erfurt had capitulated on the day after the battle of Jena—that the French occupied it, and that a garrison of four thousand men had surrendered at discretion. Then came the news that the French, who had not met with the slightest resistance, and were driving every thing before them, had crossed the Elbe, and were moving on Potsdam and Berlin. The royal couple learned at the same time that Count Schulenburg had left Berlin with the troops without permission, and solely on his own responsibility, and that he had forgotten in his hurry to remove the immense quantity of arms from the arsenal. Another day dawned and brought even more disastrous tidings. The French were reported as approaching the fortress of Küstrin by forced marches!

A panic seized the garrison. Most of the officers and privates, and the whole suite of the king, declared loudly, "Peace only can save us! Further resistance is vain, and will increase our calamities. Submission to the conqueror may save what remains." Minister von Haugwitz used this language, and so did Generals von Köckeritz and von Zastrow, and so thought the commander of Küstrin, though he did not utter his sentiments.

The king listened to all these supplications and suggestions with grave and gloomy composure. He did not say a word, but looked sometimes with an inquiring glance at the pale face of the queen. She understood him, and whispered with a smile: "Courage, my husband, courage!" And he nodded to her, and said in a low voice: "I will have courage to the bitter end! We cannot remain here, for the report that the French are approaching has been confirmed. Let us go to Graudenz!"

Louisa laid her hand on the king's shoulder, and looked tenderly into his eyes. "Whither you go, I go," she said,

"even though we should be compelled to escape beyond the sea or into the ice-fields of Siberia; we will remain together, and so long as I am with you, adversity cannot break my heart."

Frederick kissed her and then went to make the necessary arrangements for their departure, to give his final orders to the commander of Küstrin, M. von Ingelsheim: "Defend the fortress to the last extremity, and capitulate under no circumstances whatever."

The queen seemed calm and composed so long as her husband was at her side. But when he had withdrawn, she burst into tears; sinking down on a chair, she buried her face in her hands and sobbed aloud.

"You are weeping!" whispered a soft, sweet voice. "Oh, dear mother, do not weep," said another, and two heads leaned on her shoulders—the heads of her oldest sons. She took her hands from her face, and shook the tears from her eyes. She kissed her sons, and, placing both of them before her, gazed at them a long time with an air of melancholy tenderness.

"Yes," she said, and while she spoke her voice became firmer, and her face radiant—"yes, I am weeping; nor am I ashamed of my tears. I am weeping for the downfall of my house—the loss of that glory with which your ancestors and their generals crowned the Hohenzollern dynasty, and the splendor of which extended over the whole of Prussia—nay, over all Germany. That glory has, I say, departed forever. Fate has destroyed in a day a structure in the erection of which great men had been engaged for two centuries. There is no longer a Prussian state, a Prussian army, and Prussian honor! Ah! my sons, you are old enough to comprehend and appreciate the events now befalling us; at a future time, when your mother will be no more among the living, remember this unhappy hour. Shed tears for me, as I do for the ruin of our country! But listen," she added, and her eyes beamed with enthusiasm, "do not content yourselves with shedding tears! Act, develop your strength. Prussia's genius, perhaps, will favor you. Then deliver your nation from the disgrace and humiliation in which it is at present grovelling! Try to recover the now eclipsed fame of your ancestors, as your great-grandfather, the great elector, once avenged, at Fehrbellin, the defeats of his father against the Swedes. Let not the degeneracy of the age carry you away, my sons; become men and heroes. Should you lack this ambition,

you would be unworthy of the name of princes and grandsons of Frederick the Great. But if, in spite of all efforts, you should fail in restoring the former grandeur of the state, then seek death as Prince Louis Ferdinand sought it!"

CHAPTER VIII.

NAPOLEON IN POTSDAM.

THE unheard-of and never-expected event had taken place; the son of the Corsican lawyer, the general of the Revolution, had defeated the Prussian army, compelled the royal family to flee to the eastern provinces, and now made his triumphal entry into their capital! On the afternoon of the 24th of October he arrived in Potsdam; the royal palace had to open its doors to him; the royal servants had to receive him as reverentially as though he had been their sovereign!

Napoleon was now master of Prussia as well as of all Germany. But his classic face remained as cold and calm in these days of proud triumph as it had been in the days of adversity. His successes seemed to surprise him as little as his early misfortunes had discouraged him. When ascending the broad carpeted staircase, he turned to Duroc, his grand marshal and beckoned him to his side. "Just notice, grand marshal," he said, in so loud a voice that it resounded through the palace, "just notice the strange coincidence. If I remember rightly, it is just a year to-day since the fine-looking Emperor Alexander of Russia arrived here in Potsdam, and paid a visit to the queen. Please ask the steward who received us at the foot of the stairs, whether it is not so."

Duroc went away, and soon returned with the answer that his majesty had not been mistaken; it was just a year to-day since the Emperor of Russia arrived in Potsdam.

A faint smile overspread Napoleon's face. "I will occupy the same rooms which Alexander then occupied," he said, passing on.

Duroc hastened back, to give the necessary orders. Napoleon walked down the corridor with ringing, soldier-like footsteps, followed by his marshals, and entered the large portrait-gallery of the Prussian monarchs, who looked down on him with grave eyes.

The emperor paused in the middle of the hall and glanced

over the portraits with a gloomy air. "All those men had a high opinion of themselves," he said, in a sullen tone; "they were proud of their high birth and of their royal crown, and yet death has trampled them all in the dust. I will now take upon myself the task of death: I will annihilate this Prussia which dared to take up arms against me, and who knows whether this gallery of Prussian kings will not close with Frederick William III.? Nothing on earth is lasting, and sovereigns now-a-days fall from their thrones as over-ripe apples from trees. The crown of Prussia fell to the ground on the battle-fields of Jena and Auerstädt!"

The portraits of the Prussian rulers looked down silently on the triumphant conqueror, and neither his scornful voice, nor the haughty glances with which he contemplated them, disturbed their tranquillity. Not a voice answered these arrogant and insulting words; the marshals stood silent and respectful, and still seemed to listen to the voice of the oracle which had just announced to the portraits of the royal ancestors of the present king the downfall of their house. But Napoleon's brow, which had momentarily beamed with proud thoughts, was again clouded. Joining his hands on his back, he crossed the hall to the large central window, from which there was a fine and extensive view of the lawn, with its old trees and splendid statues, and beyond, of the Havel and its hilly banks. He gazed gloomily at this landscape, then turned and looked again at the pictures, but only for a moment, as though he would threaten them once more, and make them feel again the angry glance of him who had come to dethrone their descendant and appropriate his crown. Then he fixed his eyes on the portrait of a handsome woman whose large blue eyes seemed to gaze at him, and her crimson lips to greet him with a winning smile. Quite involuntarily, and as if attracted by the beauty of this likeness, he approached and contemplated it long and admiringly.

"Truly," he said, "that is a charming creature. That lady must have been wondrously lovely, and at the same time surpassingly graceful and high-spirited."

"Sire," said Duroc, who had followed him and overheard his words, "sire, she is still wondrously lovely, and, as your majesty says, surpassingly graceful and high-spirited. It is the portrait of Queen Louisa of Prussia."

A dark expression mantled Napoleon's face, and, bending an angry glance on Duroc, he said, "It is well known that you were always foolishly in love with the Queen of Prussia,